THE Beſt Acquaintance AND HIGHEST HONOUR OF Chriſtians,

OR, A Diſcourſe of Acquaintance with God.

By *Matthew Newcomen*, late Miniſter of *Dedham* in *Eſſex*.

Job 22.21. *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace.*

John 8.16. *I am not alone, but I and the Father which hath ſent me.*

1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye are called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

1 John 1. 3. *And truly our fellowſhip is with the Father and with his Son Chriſt Jeſus.*

James. 2. 23. *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs, and he was called the friend of God.*

Pſal. 149. 10. *This honour have all his Saints.*

John. 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not ſervants, but I have called you friends.*

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THE Beſt Acquaintance, AND *Higheſt Honour,* OF CHRISTIANS.

Job. 22. verſ. 21.
Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace: thereby good ſhall come unto thee.

CHAP. I.

The opening of the words, and of the nature of the great duty of acquainting our ſelves with God.

THe words are the words of *Eliphaz*, one of *Job's* three friends, and as it ſhould ſeem, the chiefeſt of the three, either for

age, or *dignity*, or *wiſdom*: for the other two give him the priority in ſpeaking. He having in the beginning of the Chapter given *Job a bitter pill* to chew upon, in *verſ.* 5, 6, 7. that he might not leave the mind of *Job* exulcerated, towards the latter end of his diſcourſe *attempers his ſpeech* to a milder and ſweeter ſtrain, giving him firſt *counſel*, *verſ.* 21, 22. then promiſing him *comfort*, *verſ.* 23. to the end.

In this 21. *v.* we have two things. *Officium*, *Beneficium*. *A work* to be done, or a duty to be performed by *Job*, and indeed *by every one*. And that in theſe words. *Acquaint now thyſelf with him.* 2. A *benefit* to be obtained by the performance of this duty, and that is peace and good. *Acquaint now thyſelf with him, and be at peace: ſo ſhall good come unto thee.*

Acquaint. The word tranſlated *acquaint* is diverſly rendred by

by Interpreters. The *Chaldee* paraphraſe renders it, *Learn of him*; The *Greek*, γενοῦ σκληρὸς, *be thou hard or ſtout*, meaning patient in bearing Affliction. The Vulgar Latine, *Acquieſce ei*. Munſter, *Conveniat tibi cum eo*. The *Syriack* and *Arabick*, *Coæqua te ei*. The *Tigurine*, *Accommoda te illi*. Coccejus, *Fac periculum*. *Pagnine* and *Junius*, *Aſſueſce te illi*. The *French*, *Accointe-toy*. An old *Engliſh* tranſlation reads it, *Reconcile thy ſelf unto him*. Our Tranſlation reads it, *Acquaint thy ſelf with him*. Making choice of a word that takes in both the *Chaldees*, *diſce ab eo*. And the vulgars, *Acquiſce*; and the *Tigurine*, *Accommoda te illi*. And *Munſters*, *Conveniat tibi cum eo*. And the old *Engliſh*, *Reconcile thy ſelf to him*. As we ſhall ſee afterwards God willing. *

* The Hebrew word סָכַן hath (as many other words in the Hebrew) various ſignifications, and ſome of them ſeemingly contrary to others, as *Prodeſſe*, *Increpare*, *arguere*, *aſſueſcere*, *theſaurizare*, *recondere*, *nocere*, *depauperare*, *periclitari* ſignificatione *Rabbinis* conſuetâ. *Pagnin.* The ſeptuagint render it ſometimes by ἀρέσκω, ſometimes by χράομαι, ſometimes by κτάομαι, ſome-

times by ἐπισκοπὴ εἰμὶ, sometimes by θάλπω, sometimes by διδάσκω, sometimes by κατασκευάζω. *Kircher. Marius de Calasio* observes four principal acceptations of the word in Scripture. 1. *Prodesse*, or *utilem esse*. 2. *Thesaurizare*. 3. *Calefacere*. 4. *Depauperare*, to which he adds a fifth of the *Rabbins* and *Chaldees*, which is, *periculum facere*, or *periclitari*. And this great difference of significations which this word is capable of, is the reason why there is so great variety in the translation of this Text.

The word in the Original translated *acquaint*, is הַסְכֵּן which is used in that Conjugation *Hiphil*, but in two places besides this in all the Scripture. The one is *Numb.* 22. 30. where *Balaams* ass saith to him, הִסְבַּנְתִּי הַהַסְכֵּן Nunquid assuescendo assuetus sum; *Was I ever wont to do thus*. The other is, *Psal.* 139. 2. where the *Psalmist* saith, *Thou art acqainted with all my wayes*. In the Original it is הִסְכַּנְתָּה which our singing Psalms according to the Emphasis of the Original well render. *And by familiar*

liar cuſtom art acquainted with my wayes.

Acquaint thy ſelf *now*: נָא: that is an expletive particle, and ſignifies as much as *nunc, ideo, quæſo*, and accordingly ſome here read, Acquaint *now* thy ſelf. Others, acquaint *therefore* thy ſelf. Others, acquaint I pray thee thy ſelf. It is a particle that implies *ſeriouſneſs* in him that ſpeaks, and *weight* and *moment* in the thing that is ſpoken of.

Acquaint now thy ſelf *with him*, that is, with God. The Almighty ſpoken of before, *v.* 17. and again *v.* 23. *Acquaint thy ſelf with him, and be at peace*, that is, thou ſhalt be at peace; for ſo, as the learned *Mercer* obſerves, it is uſual with the Hebrews to put the Imperative mood for the Future tenſe. Thou ſhalt be at peace: *thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* Good, that is all kind of good, *Temporal, Spiritual*, and *Eternal*, as is ex-

emplified afterwards in the following verses, to the end of the Chapter. That which from the words thus opened commends it self to our observation is this.

That the great concernment of every man is to acquaint himself with God. I say, The great concernment of every man, that which every man should make his greatest study and business, and look upon himself as most concerned in, is to acquaint himself with God.

I shall immediately fall upon the opening of the Nature of this acquainting our selves with God in these three particulars that are necessarily included in it.

First, This acquainting our selves with God implies *a true and right knowledge of God.* For you will all readily conclude, it is impossible for a man to have acquaintance with a person whom

whom he hath never had any knowledge of. If a man ſhould come to one of us, and name to us a man that lives at *Rome* or *Conſtantinople*, or the *Indies*, and ask us if we be acquainted with ſuch a man, we would preſently ſay we do not ſo much as know him, therefore how ſhould we have any acquaintance with him? Ignorance of God you know is rendred as a reaſon of mens being eſtranged from God: therefore they that would have acquaintance with God, muſt labour to know God. This *David* exacts of his ſon *Solomon*. And *thou* Solomon *my ſon, know thou the God of thy Fathers*, &c. Ephes. 4. 18. 1 Chron. 28. 9.

Now there is a threefold knowledge of God. A knowledge by the *ear*. A knowledge by the *eye*. And a knowledge by the *taſte*. Or if you will, A knowledge of *notion* or *ſpeculation*. A knowledge of *faith*. And a knowledge of *experience*. And all

all this necessary to our acquaintance with God.

First, There is a knowledge of God that is a knowledge of notion or speculation, when men know there is a God, and who, and what this God is, and how he is distinguished from all other persons and things whatsoever. "That he is a Spirit, or spiritual "substance, one in essence, distinguished into three equally "blessed, and glorious Persons, "the eternal beginning of all beings, the incomprehensible "Author and fountain of all life "and motion, the almighty Creator, upholder, and ruler of the "whole universe, who is all life, "and all wisdom, and all power, "and all goodness, and all truth, "and all blessedness, and all glory, whose truth, power, goodness, mercy, glory, is his very "essence, and being. This knowledge men may have of God by the hearing of the ear; and this

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men may have, and yet have no acquaintance with God; this knowledge alone is not ſufficient to acquaintance with God, and yet this is ſo neceſſary, that without it there can be no acquaintance.

There is therefore, Secondly, A further degree of knowledge, & that is a knowledge of God by the eye; and this is that which we call the knowledge of Faith. Faith you know is compared to the eye, and though Faith it ſelf come by hearing, and the knowledge that we get by hearing, is preparatory to the knowledge of Faith, yet it is not the very knowledge of faith; no, that imports ſomething more.

Now there is a twofold faith. A faith of effectual perſwaſion, whereby the ſoul yields ſuch a full and effectual aſſent to the things it knows, as that the heart is affected towards them, and with them, according to the nature

ture of them. Secondly, There is a faith of particular application, whereby the soul applies to it self the things that it knows, as its own portion. Proportionably there is a double knowledge of God by faith.

First, The knowledge of the faith of effectual perswasion, whereby the soul doth by the eye of faith see God in his nature, and attributes, and glory, so clearly and evidently, that his eye affects his heart with love, and fear, and reverence, and all holy affections answerable to the goodness and greatness of that God whom by faith he seeth. And he saith with *Job*, *Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Job 42. 5, 6.

Secondly, There is a knowledge of God by faith, which is the faith of particular application; that is, when a man so knows God, as that he knows him to be his God in particular and

and can ſay with *Thomas*, *My Lord and my God.* And can joyn with the Church in heart as well as voice in ſinging that, *Pſal.* 48. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever.* Now the firſt of theſe, that is, ſuch a knowledge of God as may effectually work our hearts to the love, and reverence, and fear of God, to deſire after him, and delight in him; this is abſolutely neceſſary to our acquainting our ſelves with God, for without this we ſhall never indeed ſeek acquaintance with God, nor prize, but ſlight it; and without this God will never condeſcend to acquaint himſelf with us, but diſdain and abhor us; therefore this knowledge of God is neceſſary *ad ipſum eſſe*, to the very being of our acquaintance with God. But then the other knowledge of God by faith, that is, by the faith of a particular application this is indeed neceſſary,

ry, *ad bene esse*, to our more free and comfortable acquainting our selves, and conversing with God. For as he said, *Quid mihi Deus si non meus.* What is God to me, if he be not mine? yet this is not so absolutely necessary to our first acquainting our selves with God as the former, but is rather a fruit, and a consequent of our acquainting our selves with God.

There is a third knowledge of God, and that is a knowledge of Experience. In Scripture phrase men are said to know those things that they have experience of, and not to know those things that they have had no experience of. And this experimental knowledge is in Scripture in special manner called Acquaintance. It is said of the Lord Christ, That

Isa. 53. 3. *he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.* That is, he had felt, and tasted, and had experience of griefs and sorrows

of all kinds. Now this is an experimental knowledge; ſuch a knowledge of God as this, is that which the Apoſtle *John* ſpeaks of, *That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you.* And this is that which *Peter* ſuppoſeth in the Saints. *If ſo be that ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious.*

1 Joh. 1. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 3.

A ſecond thing included in this acquaintance with God, it is peace and reconciliation with God. Therefore *Munſter*, as I told you, renders the word, *Conveniat tibi cum eo.* Make agreement with him. And our old *Engliſh* tranſlation renders it, *Reconcile thy ſelf to him.* This we muſt know, that we are all by nature not only meer ſtrangers to God, for then a little matter might bring us into acquaintance with him, ſo gracious is he, and communicative of himſelf and love;

love; but we are enemies to God, and God is an enemy to us. We that are infinitely beneath him, are enemies to him *unjustly*, and without cause; and have done him all the mischief and despite that possibly we can; and he is *justly* become an enemy to us. And while terms stand thus, what acquaintance can there be between God and us? Will any man take one into his acquaintance, that hath been his *ancient, constant*, and *bitter* enemy, till first he be reconciled to him? What King would take an open enemy into his Court, and make him his favourite, till first he hath made his peace with him? *Can two* Amos 3.3. *walk together except they be agreed* saith God by the Prophet. We must be reconciled to God, and get our peace made in Christ, if we would acquaint our selves with him. That is a second thing included in this acquaintance

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with God. Acquaintance is only between friends, therefore friends and acquaintance are *Synonyma*, both in our ordinary language, and in the language of Scripture, *Pſal.* 55. 13.

A third thing implyed in this acquaintance with God, it is converſe with God. A converſing familiarly with God, as one friend converſeth with another. Only this we muſt take notice of, That among men there is a twofold friendſhip and familiarity, either *inter pares*, or *inter inæquales*. And where familiarity and converſe is between thoſe, between whom there is great inequality, there it muſt be managed with that *decorum* that becomes the diſtance that is between their perſons. As ſuppoſe a King ſhould take an affection to ſome mean and ordinary perſon, and take him into intimate converſe with himſelf, this Man muſt not think now to treat the

King as he would do one with whom he is, as we ſay, *hail fellow well met*: but with much reverence, and obſerving the diſtance that is between the King and him, or elſe he may quickly forfeit his intereſt in the Kings favour, and familiarity: So here, the diſtance between God and us is infinite, therefore we muſt manage our converſe and familiarity with God with loweſt humility, and greateſt reverence, and a deportment of our ſelves every way anſwerable to the diſtance that is between God and us.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of Converſe with God, and wherein it conſiſts.

NOw this converſe and familiarity with God, ſo far as it is to be managed and carried on by us, conſiſts in theſe ſeven particulars.

Firſt. In a *frequent and daily viſiting of God.* Friends and Acquaintance, you know they do often viſit one another, and that is the way to get and keep acquaintance: ſo ſhould we often viſit God. Firſt, By *ſhort and ejaculatory prayers.* Secondly, By *ſet and ſolemn prayers every day, morning and evening.*

And we muſt look upon this, not as matter of courteſie but of duty. It was anciently a cuſtom among the *Romans*, that the meaner ſort of people among them, did conſtantly go every

morning to the house of some or other of the Senators or chief men of *Rome*, whom they had chosen for their patron, and solemnly salute him; and this the great man looked for from his clients as their duty, and this the poor people looked upon as their concernment and advantage, this being the *means* to retain him stil for their friend and patron. I find also, that among the same *Romans* it was a custom in the families of great Persons, that all the Children and servants of the family should every morning come in a body together into the presence of the Lord, and Master of the family, and give him a solemn *Salve*, and every evening make their appearance together again before him, and give him a solemn *Vale*: God is that Sovereign Lord and Father, of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named, as the Apostle *Paul* speaks; should not there-

Alex. ab Alex. li. 5. c. 24.

therefore all his Children, all his Servants, and all his Friends viſit him and ſalute him morning and evening with their prayers? There are ſome indeed that never viſit God but when they are in extremities, like thoſe, *Iſa. 26. 16. Lord, in trouble they have viſited thee.*

A Second thing in which this converſe with God conſiſts, is in a being much in the preſence and company of God. Friends and acquaintance, you know, they do not only viſit one another, but they ſtay ſome while each with other, they cannot content themſelves with ſhort viſits, with a how do you, and no more; but they love to be in the preſence and company of one another, and if it were poſſible, and if their other neceſſary occaſions would permit it, they would never part, they would be together al the day long. So it is here in this converſe with God; there is not

Ne valeam ſi non totis Deciane, diebus. Et tecum totis noctibus eſſe velim Martial.

only a visiting of God frequently and daily, every morning and every evening, but there is an abiding in the presence of God. What is that? Why there is a twofold presence of God. There
Psal.139. 7. is a *general presence* of God whereby we are present unto God, God seeing and beholding us, and this is no more than is common to all the creatures upon earth, yea to the devils and damned in hell: and there is a *special presence* of God, whereby God is present unto us, and we do in the secret of our souls apprehend him as really present to us, as if we saw him with our eyes. Of this *David* speaks, *Psal.* 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me.* Now it is this presence of God in which this Converse with God consists, when the Soul doth apprehend in it self that God is present with him, and set himself as in the presence of God, this is a piece of the

Souls

Souls converſe with God. To be, as we alwayes are, in the general preſence of God, without the ſpecial apprehenſions of his preſence, is rather a hinderance to converſe and acquaintance with God, than any thing elſe. If the beſt friend I have in the world ſhould come into the room where I were, and paſs too and again by me, and ſtand right before me, all the day long, I ſhould be ſo buſie in talking with other men, about other matters, that I ſhould not regard him, nor take any notice of him, and this one day after another; this were the way rather to break off the intercourſe and acquaintance that is between us, than to continue it: So here, wherever we are, God is preſent with us, before us, behind us, round about us; if our heads and hearts be ſo taken up with the world, and luſts and vanities, that we mind not God, though

presence, nor take no notice of him, this is the way rather to lose than to gain acquaintance with God. If therefore we would converse with God, we must take notice of, and acknowledge the presence of God. First, by a frequent and actual remembrance of him, and lifting up our thoughts and desires to him. Secondly, by a reverent demeanour of our selves continually, as before him. This is that the holy Ghost calls for. *In all thy wayes acknowledge him.* And, *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* And this, they that have any acquaintance with God desire to be, and do, to acknowledge God in all their wayes, to be in the thoughts of God, and in the apprehensions and breathings after God all the day long, and it is their grief that they can be so no more, and they can at least say with *David*, That *the thoughts of God are precious to them,*

Prov. 3. 6. chap. 23. 17.

Psal. 139. 17.

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as the preſence of an intimate friend is precious unto us, and it grieves us that we can have no more of it. Beſides this, there is a *ſolemn preſence* of God in his Ordinances, in regard of which, they which attend theſe Ordinances are ſaid to appear before God, and to ſtand in the preſence of the Lord. And God hath appointed ſet and ſolemn times for all that are or would be acquainted with him, thus to appear before him, and to ſtand in his preſence, and in our ſo doing conſiſts a great part of our acquaintance with God.

A third thing wherein this Converſe with God ſtands, is in our improving God, and our intereſt in him, and acquaintance with him. If I have one that is my intimate friend & acquaintance, this is the benefit I have by it, I have one now into whoſe boſom I can intruſt all my ſecrets, and eaſe all my griefs and troubles,

I have one with whom I can consult in all my difficult and weighty affairs, with whom I may make bold in all my wants and exigencies; so I neither can, nor will do, with another that is a stranger, and none of my acquaintance. True friendship and acquaintance stands not in bare words and complemental visits, but in real communication of offices and benefits: so here, converse and acquaintance with God stands in our improving God, and our interest in him, so as to acquaint him with all our secrets, so as to impart unto him all our griefs and fears, so as to relie upon him to guide us in all our wayes, and to supply all our wants. This God looks we should do, and takes it unkindly when we do otherwise: as a true friend that is willing and able to help his friend, takes it unkindly if he go to any other, thinks himself either distrusted or slighted,

ſlighted, and it is almoſt a matter of falling out between them; ſo God takes it unkindly, when we in our wants, or fears, or ſtreights, in any kind whatſoever, go to any creature in heaven or earth, but only to him; *God* even falls out with us upon it. What ſaith he? *Is it not becauſe there is not a God in* Iſrael, *that ye go to enquire of* Baalzebub *the god of* Ekron? 2 Kings 1. 3.

A fourth thing wherein this converſe and acquaintance with God conſiſts, is in our compliance with God. Among men you ſee, he that would have acquaintance, and keep acquaintance with one, eſpecially that is his ſuperiour, he muſt ſtudy compliance, he muſt be careful to accommodate himſelf to the genius and diſpoſition of the other, and be as it were transformed and moulded into his very image. *Amicus alter idem.* So it is here, this converſe with God

God consists in a complying with God. Therefore, as I said before, the *Tigurine* translation renders the word. *Accommoda te illi.* Accommodate thy self to him. There can be no converse, no acquaintance with God, unless we resign and accommodate our selves to him, and comply with him in all things. *Ais aio. Negas nego.* To say as God saith, to like what he likes, to dislike what he dislikes, to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates; this is the way to converse and acquaintance with God.

A fifth thing wherein this converse and acquaintance with God consists, is in a wise observing his goings towards us, and his dealings with us, and in a thankful acknowledging even the least of his favours and courtesies bestowed upon us. Thus we deal with men, there is none of us all, but if a friend of ours send us but a small token, or do

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us a ſmall courteſie, we think our ſelves ingaged in point of common humanity, to take notice of it, and thank him for it; that is common between friends, and that is the way to continue friendſhip: O that we could be as punctual, and as exact with God this way, as we are with men; but who is there that doth not receive many more mercies from God, than he takes notice of, or acknowledgeth with thankfulneſs?

A ſixth thing wherein this acquaintance with God lyes, is in our being acquainted with Gods ſecrets. According to that of the Pſalmiſt, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* And, *His ſecret is with the righteous.* Not that the moſt intimate of Gods acquaintance know *all* Gods ſecrets. No, there are ſome that are *Arcana inſcrutabilia*, but they know more of Gods ſecrets, than any other in the world

Pſal. 25. 14. Prov. 3. 32.

world do. And there are ſome ſecrets that they may without any offence deſire God to make known unto them, as the ſecret counſel of God in their Election, and the writing of their names in heaven, before the foundations of the world were laid. This is a ſecret that God imparts to none but his ſpecial friends. And this, all that are of Gods acquaintance, may boldly beg of God to have imparted to them.

A ſeventh thing wherein this converſe and acquaintance with God conſiſts, is in God's viſiting us, and our entertaining of theſe viſits. It is a great favour and honour that God doth us, that he will give us leave to viſit him with our prayers and ſupplications, but that he ſhould condeſcend ſo low as to come and viſit us; this is a greater favour and honour. For the King to come to a private mans houſe,

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and give him a friendly viſit, is more than to give him leave to come to Court, and preſent his petition; that is as it were, a common courteſie in reſpect of the other. "Now what kind of "things theſe viſits are, I cannot "explain unto you, they are "things, in a manner, unuttera-"ble, and if I could ſpeak of "them never ſo diſtinctly and "clearly, you that have not had "experience of them, could ne-"ver underſtand what I mean; and you that have experience, know more already of them, than either you or I can expreſs. But all they that have acquaintance with God, do highly prize theſe viſits, and therefore *firſt* do earneſtly ſollicite God that he would pleaſe to beſtow a viſit upon them, thinking long for it, and ſaying with *David*, *Oh when wilt thou come unto me?* Secondly, If God pleaſe to honour them with a viſit, they entertain it with greateſt

Pſal. 101. 2.

greateſt thankfulneſs, and rejoycing. One viſit from God, doth them more good than an hundred other bleſſings beſtowed by God upon them. When *Mary* the Mother of our Lord went to give her Cozen *Elizabeth* a viſit, ſhe was ſo affected with the honour, that not only her heart in her belly, but the Babe in her womb leaped for joy. *And whence is this,* ſaith ſhe, *that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me? for as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalvation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.* O then, when the Lord himſelf, the Lord of life and glory ſhall pleaſe to come and viſit a poor ſinful ſoul, what joy, what triumph will there be? what crying out! as Mr. *Glover*, when he was going to the ſtake to be burnt, *O Auſtine, he is come, he is come!* What admiration! crying out with *Elizabeth*, Whence is this that *my Lord* ſhould come to me!

Luke 1. 43. 44.

Thus

Thus I have ſhewed you what this acquaintance with God is, and wherein it conſiſts. And when I ſay, the great concernment of every man is to acquaint himſelf with God, the meaning of it is this: That it greatly concerns every one of us to labour to *know God*, and that *not only* with a knowledge *of notion* and *ſpeculation*, but with a *knowledge of faith* and *experience*; as alſo, to *get our peace made with God*, and then to *converſe familiarly with him*; and to that end, 1. *To viſit him often with our prayers.* 2. To be *frequently in his preſence.* 3. To *improve our intereſt in him* upon all occaſions. 4. To *comply with him*, framing our hearts and wayes according to his will in all things. 5. To *obſerve and give him thanks for all his favours.* To beg, 6. *That he would acquaint us with his ſecrets.* And 7. *Honour us with his viſits.* And this is to acquaint our ſelves with God.

CHAP. III.

Shewing the Reasons, why it is the great concernment of every Man to acquaint himself with God.

MAn is, as the Proverb tells us, a sociable creature, God at the first framed him for company and society, therefore of Man in his Innocency, God pronounced this; *It is not good for man to be alone.* Hence it is that every Man naturally seeks to associate and acquaint himself with some Companion or other, but since the nature of man is become so corrupted and vitiated by the fall of *Adam*, it concerns every man to be very careful whom he doth acquaint and associate himself with, not only for his reputation and honour sake, because *Nosciturr ex socio qui non dignoscitur ex se*; but also for his souls

Gen. 2. 18.

ſouls ſake, becauſe a mans aſſociate and acquaintance hath a ſecret and powerful influence upon his mind and ſpirit, to make it either better or worſe, according as his acquaintance is. Therefore it is that the holy Ghoſt gives that neceſſary caution; *Make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man thou ſhalt not go, leſt thou learn his wayes, and get a ſnare to thy ſoul.* Prov. 22. 24. The ſame may be ſaid of a drunkard, of a ſwearer, of a deſpiſer of the Word and Ordinances of God, of a perverter of the truths of God, and of every other ſinner whatſoever. *Make no friendſhip* with him, *leſt thou get a ſnare to thy ſoul.* But O, how is this wholeſom and neceſſary counſel of the holy Ghoſt forgotten; and how unwary are moſt men in the choice of their friends and acquaintance, though the holy Ghoſt again tells us, *With the pure men will learn purity, and* Pſal. 18. 27.

with the froward they will learn frowardness. So our English Translation reads it. *Et cum perverso perverteris*; so the Vulgar Latin. But now I propound unto you here an acquaintance, from whence you need not fear any hurt or danger, but rather on the contrary may expect much good; for so saith the Text: *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace; so shall good come unto thee.* The *first* benefit of this acquaintance is *peace*, peace *with God*, peace with *thine own conscience*, peace with the rest of *the creatures*. First, *Peace with God*, that must needs be, because reconciliation and peace with God, is as you have heard, one ingredient of this acquaintance with God. Secondly, *Peace with conscience*, for conscience is but *Gods Deputy*, Gods *Advocate* and *Notary* in the soul; and as among men, when a man hath made his peace with the principal Creditor

Sic Clemens Alexandr. Tertullian. Athanas. Ambrosius, Cyrillus, Augustinus, aliiq; locum interpretantur.

tor or party that had a controverſie in Law againſt him, the Advocate, the Sollicitor, his mouth is ſtopped, he hath no more to ſay: ſo here, having peace with God, thou haſt peace with conſcience; to be ſure then, thou haſt *jus ad rem*, if not *jus in re*. Thirdly, *Peace with the creatures*. For *thou ſhalt be in league with the ſtones of the field: and the beaſts of the field ſhall be at peace with thee*, &c. And Secondly, *Good ſhall come unto thee*, and that a threefold good; *Utile*, *Honeſtum*, or *Honorificum*, *Jucundum*. For, Firſt, this acquaintance with God is the moſt *profitable* acquaintance. Secondly, It is the moſt *honourable* acquaintance. And, Thirdly, It is the moſt *comfortable acquaintance*.

Job 5. 23, 24.

Firſt, I ſay, acquaintance with God is the *moſt profitable* acquaintance; there never was any man, that ever was acquainted with God, nor never will be, but

1.

but got abundance of good by that acquaintance. I have read of *Calvin* and *Beza*, and other men of eminent learning and holineſs, that the men of their acquaintance have proteſted, that they never were in their company, but they returned *doctiores, aut meliores*, either more learned, or made better; what then *may*, and *muſt*, and *will* thoſe ſay, that are acquainted with God? If the light of a glow-worm will help a man ſo much, what will the light of the Sun? When *Moſes* had been converſing with God upon the Mount but for a little time, forty dayes and forty nights, the Text ſaith, *his face did ſhine*. Our acquaintance with men may ſully and deform us, they may affricate ſome of their errours or vices to us, *Ilva ut mucorem contactâ traxit ab uvâ*. But now converſing with God, acquainting our ſelves with God, that will make our faces to ſhine.

Exod. 24. 29.

O how *humble*, how *holy*, how *heavenly*, how *God-like* will that man grow that acquaints himself with God?

Secondly, As this acquaintance with God is a *profitable* acquaintance, so it is an *honourable* acquaintance. Men count it an honour to have acquaintance with those that are their Superiours; hence it is *that many seek the Rulers favour*. You read of one *Zabud* the son of *Nathan*, that he was the principal officer in *Solomons* Court, and that he *was the Kings friend*. Which of those think you, did he count his greatest honour? and if he must have been put to his choice to part with one of them, which of them do you think he would most willingly have parted with? It is easily determined. Surely to be the *Kings friend* was *more* to him than his office, whatever his office were. O then, what is it to be the friends of *God*, to be ad-

2. Prov. 29. 26. 1 Kings 4. 5.

mitted into familiarity and acquaintance with God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? It is spoken of *Abraham* as his great honour, and the great reward of his faith, that he was
James 2. 23. *called the friend of God. Cuicunque hæc sors contigerit ut amicus Dei sit is humanæ fœlicitatis terminos transcendit*, saith *Philo*. Whose lot soever it be to be the friend of God, he hath transcended the bounds of humane felicity. And yet this honour have all the children of faithful *Abraham*, as well as himself; and indeed this honour all may have that will. Therefore that Souldier whom *Austine* mentions, *lib.* 8. *Confess. cap.* 6. said wisely, *Dic quæso, "omnibus laboribus nostris quo ambimus pervenire? quid quærimus? "cujus rei causa militamus? Majoresne esse poterint spes nostræ in "palatio quam ut amici imperatoris "fiamus? & ibi quid non fragile, "plenumque periculis? Et per quot*

pericula

"*pericula pervenitur ad grandius*
"*periculum? Et quamdiu iſtud*
"*erit? Amicus autem Dei ſi vo-*
"*luero ecce nunc fio.* Tell me I
"pray, whither do we by all
"our adventures aſpire? what
"ſeek we? what run we the ha-
"zard of war for? can our hopes
"in the Pallace riſe higher, than
"to be accounted Friends to the
"Emperour? and in that ho-
"nour, what is there that is not
"frail, and full of danger? and
"how long will that endure?
But the friend of God, if I will,
I may be made now preſently.
And who but mad-men or fools,
would refuſe ſuch honour.

Thirdly, This acquaintance 3.
with God, as it is moſt profit-
able and honourable, ſo it is moſt
comfortable, *pleaſant*, and *delight-*
ful. And here I muſt appeal to
all thoſe that have ever had ex-
perience of acquaintance with
God, if they have not found more
true, real, ſolid joy and comfort

in

in one quarter of an hours secret converse with God, yea in one friendly look or word of God, than ever they did in all their lives besides? you that are strangers to this, I know will not believe it, nor cannot think it; but those that have experience of it, will bear me witness that *I speak the truth in Christ, I lye not*, nor *hyperbolize*. What is the comfort and joy of heaven it self, but the presence of God, sweet communion and converse with God; so far therefore as we can attain this upon earth, so far we have an heaven upon earth. The *Jews* have a saying concerning the last day of the feast of Tabernacles which Scripture calls *the last and great day of the feast*, Joh.7.37. that he who never knew the joy of that day, never knew joy in all his life: but I am sure it is much more true here; he that never knew the comfort and joy of acquaintance with God, never knew

knew true joy and comfort in all his life.

Well, if all this that hath been said of the *profit*, *honour*, and *comfort* of acquaintance with God, be not enough to perswade you, that it is the great concernment of every one of you to get and keep this acquaintance, I have but one thing more to add, and that is, that it is *necessary* for every one of you to acquaint your selves with God. For tell me, can you be content when you shall come to lye a dying, and then knock at the gate of mercy, saying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; can you be content that God should answer you as it is there, *I know you not whence you are*? Or, can you be content, that when you come to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, he should profess to you, *I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity*? If not, O then labour to get acquaintance with God

4.

Luke 13. 25.

Mat. 7. 23.

God and Christ now, for can you imagine that God and Christ will know them in death and judgment, who care not for knowing him, and acquainting themselves with him in the time of their lives?

CHAP. IV.

Calling us to take notice of the wonderful condescension of God towards us, in vouchsafing to admit us into his Acquaintance; and of the madness and folly of those that care not for this Acquaintance.

HEre then see the infinite goodness and condescension of God towards us his poor and worthless creatures, who though he be infinitely above us, and

and ſtands not at all in need of of us, nor cannot be in the leaſt benefited or advantaged by us, or by his acquaintance with us; but before there was made either *Man* or *Angel*, he was infinitely ſatisfied, and infinitely bleſſed in the enjoyment of himſelf; yet was he pleaſed to create *Angels* and *Men*, not only to a fitneſs and capacity of, but unto an actual communion and acquaintance with himſelf; which was more than needed on God's part, or was owing on our parts; and when we like fooliſh and unthankful wretches, upon the very firſt motion of the devil, gave away this honour and happineſs of acquaintance and communion for an *apple*, as *Eſau* ſold his birth-right for a *meſs of pottage*, and thereby not only made our ſelves unworthy for ever to be admitted into Gods favour and acquaintance, but unfit for it too, as well as unworthy; that God

ſhould

should yet please to stoop so low as to take us yet again into acquaintance with himself: this speaks the wonderful goodness of God, his infinite φιλανθρωπία, or love to mankind.

When *Esau* had once undervalued the birth-right, so far as to sell it for a mess of pottage, though afterwards it grieved him for what he had done, and he sought earnestly, and that with tears, to recover that blessing and birth-right which he had so foolishly lost, yet it could not be: so God might have dealt with *Adam*, and every one of us. The Text tells us, *Adam* lived 930 years after his sin: now if *Adam* had spent all those years in nothing but weeping and mourning, for his folly and madness in parting with his birth-right, his acquaintance and communion with God, for an apple, and in seeking earnestly, and that with tears, to recover com-

munion

munion and acquaintance with God again, and after all, had been denyed it, yet God had been altogether just and righteous.

But behold the kindness of God, and his love towards mankind! As it is said of *David*, when *Absalom* by his villanies had banished himself from his Fathers Court and presence, it is said, *The soul of King* David *longed to go forth unto Absalom*: that is, *Davids* heart was full of fatherly affection towards him, and he longs to be friends with him again: so did the heart of God even long towards man, after his sin and fall, and he did even long to be friends with him again, and to renew his acquaintance and converse with him. 2 Sam. 13. 39.

And this gracious disposition of his towards sinful man, this great desire and inclination which *God* hath after peace and renewed acquaintance with sinful man, God hath abundantly declared and testified. *First*,

1. *First*, By *appointing, ordaining*, and giving one to be a *Mediator*, a *Reconciler*, a *Peace-maker* a *Friend-maker*, between God and us.

2. *Secondly*, By *appointing* and *giving* no other nor meaner Person to this work, than *his own* blessed and dear *Son*, who is the
Heb. 1.3. *express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory.*

3. *Thirdly*, By giving this *Son* of his to be a Mediator, not only by way of *Intercession*, but also by way of *satisfaction*, to make peace for us by paying our debts, and satisfying for our sins, which he could not do but by shedding his blood, and laying down his precious life; and yet rather than God would quite lose and abandon all his interest in us, and acquaintance with us, he would not spare his own Son.

4. *Fourthly*, By testifying and proclaiming unto all men in the Ministry of the Gospel, that *he*

it

is reconciled to the world, and by re- 2 Cor. 5.
calling and inviting sinners unto 19, 20.
peace and acquaintance with himself.

Fifthly, By profering his acquaint- 5.
ance unto sinners upon such ease, and as I may say, such cheap terms, namely, that we should repent of, and cease from our hating of him, and our being enemies to him, and enter into a league of unfeigned love and friendship with him; and would any of us take one that hath been our enemy, into our acquaintance, upon other terms than these?

Sixthly, By his not only offering 6.
acquaintance with us upon those terms, by his Embassadours, his Ministers, but by his coming personally by his Spirit to our several hearts, inviting and solliciting us to this acquaintance. According to that of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* Rev. 3. 20. The *Greeks* and *Romans*

mans of old were wont alwayes to have their feaſts at ſupper; therefore when it is ſaid here, *I will come in to him, and ſup with him,* it is as if he had ſaid, *I will come in to him and feaſt with him.* And feaſting together was of old a *Symbole* of perfect reconciliation, and intimate friendſhip and acquaintance. Now, behold here the wonderful goodneſs and condeſcenſion of God, and his gracious diſpoſition and inclination towards peace and acquaintance with his poor creatures. May we not here now take up that admiring expreſſion of *David*, *And is this the manner of men, O Lord.* Did you ever read or hear of any King or Prince, that when his Subjects had highly provoked him, by their rebellion againſt him, and he had power enough to cruſh and deſtroy them, would yet not only ſend his Heralds and Ambaſſadours to them to offer terms of peace and reconciliation, but would himſelf, go in his own perſon, from houſe to houſe, and

2 Sam. 7. 19.

from

from man to man, intreating them ſeverally, and by name, that they would be friends with him their Soveraign Lord and King; and offering if they will but open the door to him, that he will forgive them, and be friends with them: did you ever read or hear of ſuch a thing? and *is this the manner of men?* but this is the manner of Gods dealing with his enemies. Behold therefore, I ſay, and admire the gracious diſpoſition of God towards ſinful man, and the great deſire he hath towards peace and renewed acquaintance with him.

In the next place, ſee here the folly and madneſs of all thoſe that are not acquainted with God. And this I fear is the ſtate of not a few among us, whatever they may think of themſelves; of whom it may be ſaid, as our Saviour ſaid of the Jews, *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape.* John 5. 37. They were a People that had read and heard the word of God; Ay,

but yet they had never heard the voice of God, they had never heard God himself speaking in his word; they had seen the temple, and the Altar, and the rest of those sacred *Symbols* that were the testimonies of Gods presence, ay, but they had never seen the face of God in those Ordinances, and therefore though they looked upon themselves as the only people in the world that were acquainted with God, yet our Saviour tells them they were mistaken they were meer strangers to him *Ye have*, saith he, *neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*

O that it were not so with some of us, who hear *of God* indeed, but hear not *God*, who have heard of God by *the hearing of the ear*, but never heard God himself by the *hearing of the heart*, who *have seen* the sanctuaries and Ordinances of God but have never seen the *face of God* in his Ordinances, and in his Sanctuaries, and so remain strangers to God, and unacquainted with him.

Par

Particularly here are two ſorts, whoſe woful condition this is.

Firſt, Thoſe *that are ignorant of God.*

Secondly, Thoſe *that have no converſe with God.*

Firſt, Thoſe *that are ignorant* of God, who know not God: they muſt needs be ſtrangers to God, and God to them; for knowledge is the firſt ſtep to acquaintance. Now, by perſons ignorant of God, I mean, not only thoſe that are groſsly ignorant, who have not a true notion of the Nature, Attributes, and Perſons in the Deity, of which there are too many every where; but by ignorant perſons, I mean, thoſe, who though they have a true notion of God, yet want the real, effectual, and powerful knowledge of God: their knowledge of God is meerly notional, and God is to them, as it were, meerly, *Notio ſecunda & ens rationis*, as the *Logicians* ſpeak. To know God really and indeed, is as I ſaid before, to know him not only by an 1.

airy speculation, but to know him by a *faith of effectual persuasion*, so to know him, as to believe him indeed to be, the most powerful, wise, and good, the most just, and holy, Creator, preserver, and Governor of the whole universe, and accordingly to have our hearts affected with love unto him, with desire after him, with fear and reverence of him, and delight in him. This, and this only, is the true knowledge of God, and whosoever they be that are destitute of this knowledge, whatever they may think of themselves, and of their own knowledge, they are yet ignorant of God, and strangers from God, through the ignorance that is in them.

Now, do we thus know God all of us? do we thus know God? thus as to acknowledge him, love him, fear him, desire him delight in him. The ox, the horse, & the dog, thus knows his Master and owner; and if we do not thus know our Creator, our Preserver, our Feeder and Maintainer,

tainer, O how ignorant and brutiſh are we? *Iſa.* 1. 3.

Secondly. Others there are that have no converſe with God, whatever they know of him, they have no converſe with him, *but live without God in the world*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome. That are as mindleſs of God, as regardleſs of God, & of all converſe with him, as if there were no God at all: who are ſo far from viſiting God daily with their prayers, that they never viſit God by prayer at all; who are ſo far from being often in the preſence of God, as thoſe are that acquaint themſelves with God, and converſe with God, that they are never in the preſence of God at all. *God is not in all their thoughts*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, and makes it the very deſcription of a wicked man. Now how many ſuch are there among us, of whom it may moſt truly be ſaid, *God is not in all their thoughts*? 2. Ephes. 2. 12. Pſal. 10. 4.

One man he awakes, and riſes in the morning, and as ſoon as he is up,

preſently without ever taking notice of God, or turning his thoughts to him, he ruſheth into his ſhop, or into his worldly buſineſſes, and is engaged in them ſoul and body, heart and hand, and ſo he continues, till of neceſſity he muſt intermit his labours to take a little food, and when he hath done that, he returns to his work again, and there continues till late at night, and then he takes his ſupper, and goes to bed, and ſleeps till morning, and then he riſeth and ſpends the ſecond day as he ſpent the firſt, and the third as the ſecond, and ſo on, one day after another, and one week after another, and one year after another, but *God is not in all his thoughts.* Another is no ſooner up and clad, but he is preſently for his ſports and games, or his company and cups, and theſe he purſues all the day long.

Iſa. 5. 11. There are *that riſe early in the morning to follow ſtrong drink, and continue until night, till the wine enflame them.* And as they ſpend one day, ſo they

they reſolve to ſpend a ſecond and a third, and ſo they would ſpend every day. *Come ye*, ſay they, *I will fetch wine; and we will fill our ſelves with ſtrong drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant. When I ſhall awake, I will ſeek it yet again.* A man may without ſuſpicion of the leaſt breach of charity conclude of theſe, that they have no acquaintance with God: *God is not in all their thoughts.*

Chap. 56. 12.

Prov. 23. 35.

I confeſs, that even the Saints themſelves have God too little in their thoughts, but they take notice of it, and bewail it, which makes one of them cry out, *O Deus æterne quomodo ſemper memor es ejus qui tui ſemper obliviſcitur? quomodo continuatam habes memoriam ejus qui perpetuam tui habet oblivionem? O Deus præſentiſſime, & remotiſſime! præſentiſſime quidem quod in te eſt omnibus creaturis tuis, remotiſſimus vero hominibus terrenis propter profundam qua teneatur oblivionem quod tu ſis in eis. Me miſerum obliviſcor Dei qui me-*

mecum eſt, & beneficiorum quæ continuo in me confert, præceptorum quæ mihi imponit, præmiorum quæ promittit, ſuppliciorum quæ minatur, & denique judicii quod inſtituet. O Pater miſericordiarum auſer à me pernitioſam adeo oblivionem tui, ut ſemper ſim tui memor ſicut tu es mei. "O eternal God, "how is it that thou art alwayes "mindful of one who is alwayes "unmindful of thee? how is it "that thou haſt a continual remem- "brance of him who hath a per- "petual forgetfulneſs of thee? O "O God, who art moſt preſent to "me, and moſt remote from me! "As for thee, thou art moſt pre- "ſent to all thy creatures, but moſt "remote from earthly men, be- "cauſe of their profound forgetful- "neſs, that thou art in them, Ah, "wretched man that I am, I forget "that God that is ever with me, the "benefits that he continually be- "ſtows upon me, the precepts "which he impoſeth on me, the "rewards which he promiſeth me, the

"the puniſhments wherewith he "threatens me, the Judgments which "he will execute. O Father of mercies, take away from me this ſo pernicious forgetfulneſs of thee, and grant that I may be ever mindful of thee, as thou art of me. But, O how few are there that are thus ſenſible of their forgetfulneſs of God, and their mindleſsneſs of him, and bewail it, and pray againſt it? No, my brethren, the generality of men live in a mindleſsneſs and regardleſsneſs, and total and conſtant forgetfulneſs of God, & love to live ſo; this is their folly and their madneſs, they ſhun the thoughts of God, and all converſe with God, as men that have ſore eyes ſhun the light of the Sun. *They ſay unto the Almighty, depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* Would you think it poſſible, that men ſhould ever arrive at that height of madneſs, as not only to live ſtrangers from God, & unacquainted with him, but to be contented ſo to live, yea to refuſe all

Job 21. 14.

all knowledge of him, and scorn all acquaintance with him?

CHAP. V.

Exhorting all to labour to get acquaintance with God, and propounding several Motives thereunto.

MY next work therefore shall be to exhort and invite every one of you to this acquaintance with God. Let me bespeak every one, into whose hands these lines may come, in the words of my Text, *Acquaint thy self with him.*

There are three things, that are the great attractives, and incentives to make us seek acquaintance with men. First, The worthiness of the person. Secondly, The benefit we may reap by their acquaintance. Thirdly, Easiness of access and acquaint-

quaintance. Now all theſe are eminently and tranſcendently in God.

Firſt, The *worthineſs of the perſon.* 1. Men that are of great eminency, either for learning and wiſdom, or for holineſs and piety, or for power and authority, or for honour and dignity, O how ambitious are prudent and intelligent men of getting acquaintance with ſuch? In all theſe particulars, *who* is like unto God, or who may be compared with him? who is infinite in wiſdom and holineſs, infinite in Majeſty, power, and glory; *He is the only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, whoſe acquaintance is more worth than the acquaintance of all the men in the world. For,

Secondly, What benefit can you 2. reap or expect from acquaintance with any man in the world, which is not infinitely more to be had in God, and that in all abundance? do you look that your friend and acquaintance ſhould counſel you in your

your ſtreights, protect you in dangers, defend you againſt enemies, pitty you in your afflictions, ſupply your wants, comfort you in your heavineſs, deliver you in all your troubles? who ſo able, ſo willing to do all this, as God for thoſe that are his friends and acquaintance? And ſuch an one thou mayeſt be if thou wilt, & haſt indeed a mind to it. For,

3. *Thirdly*, God is of open and eaſie acceſs. * It is not his being an in-

* *Ingrediamur aulas, obſecro, & obſtupeſcemus tantum argenti & auri effundi ad propitias Principum aures impetrandas. Quandoque non hebdomades ſolùm, ſed menſes, ſed & annos totos expectandum eſt, dum Principis conclave & aures pateant orationem acturo, Ad Deum immenſæ Majeſtatis Dominum, omni horâ, momentis omnibus patet aditus. Rex cœli nunquam non propitias & vacivas habet aures. Importunitatis hîc nemo inſimulatur. Gratior eſt, qui frequentior, & importunior. Adeſte terræ vermiculi, prorepite ſcarabæoli, accurrite homunculi miſelli, liberrimum vobis eſt cum conditore veſtro colloquium. Nec eſt, quod vel cauſæ veſtræ vel facundiæ quidquam diffidatis: quò ſimpliciùs perorabitis, hoc meliùs: modò non frigeat, aut exerret oratio veſtra: modò eum, quem rogatis, ex oculis non veſtrâ ſponte amittatis.* Caſſiodorus id aſſerens: *Ad penetralia judicis*, ait, *precator admittitur, & nullus inde reſpuitur, niſi qui tepidus invenitur.* Drexel. Rhet. Cæl. lib. 1. cap. 13.

viſible

viſible Majeſty, nor his dwelling in light inacceſſible, that can render our acquaintance and converſe with him, either impoſſible or difficult. Not his being inviſible, for the ſouls of men are inviſible, and yet the converſe that men have one with another, is betweeen their ſouls rather than their bodies; it is the ſoul that diſcourſeth, reaſons, underſtands, wills, loves; and if we can converſe and grow into acquaintance with a ſoul, whoſe eſſence or ſhape we never ſaw, why may we not converſe with an unſeen God too?

Nor doth it hinder our converſe and acquaintance with God, that he inhabiteth eternity, that he dwelleth in the high and holy place; for though he be infinitely above us, yet he condeſcends to communicate himſelf to us, according to our capacities. *He dwelleth on high, and yet he humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are done in earth, as well as in heaven*, to converſe with men as Pſal. 113. 5, 6.

well

well as Angels. As the Sun in heaven is far above us, and yet doth not diſdain to inlighten, and warm, and quicken the pooreſt worm that crawls upon the earth, as well as the Eagle that ſoars aloft above the clouds, and can gaze the Sun in the face. Let not therefore any poor ſoul be diſcouraged, and think or ſay, It is not for ſuch a worm, for ſuch a nothing as I am to aſpire to acquaintance and converſe with God. No, no, Men may be too high for thee to reach, and too great for thee to graſp and compaſs acquaintance with, but the great God will ſtoop to entertain acquaintance with thee, if thou wilt acquaint thy ſelf with him.

He diſdaineth not the acquaintance of the *leaſt* of men, nor of the *greateſt* of ſinners. Such was the condeſcenſion of the *divine* nature, that it diſdained not the near acquaintance with the *humane* nature: to take it into perſonal union with himſelf; and ſuch was the condeſcenſion

ſcenſion of *God in our nature*, that when he was upon earth he diſdained not the acquaintance of thoſe who upon common account were the vileſt of men, even Publicans and ſinners. And ſuch is ſtill the gracious condeſcenſion of *God in Chriſt*, that he diſdaineth not the acquaintance of the *meaneſt* Perſons or *vileſt* ſinners that ſeek acquaintance of him. Nay, Mat. 9. 11.

Secondly, He offers and tenders this acquaintance to them; and this is not uſual for great perſons to do to their Inferiours; he intreateth and beſeecheth poor ſinners that they would be reconciled to him, and acquainted with him. And this he doth.

Thirdly, Out of his meer grace and favour only, for their good and benefit, not for any gain or advantage to himſelf. *Can a man be profitable to God?* ſaith *Eliphaz*. No, God cannot be a gainer by our acquaintance: that he offers it, ſeeks it, is for our good and benefit, that Job 22. 2.

we may be made happy and blessed by it. O then, let not this grace of God be in vain to us, but accept we this gracious offer of God, *acquainting our selves with him.*

CHAP. VI.

Particularly exhorting those that never yet had acquaintance with God, now to labour for it. With Directions for the attaining of it.

NOw here are three sorts that I would apply my self unto.

1. *First.* Those that never yet were acquainted with God. My Exhortation to them shall be, that they would *now* acquaint themselves with God, *now* presently, without any further delay.

2. *Secondly.* To those that have acquainted themselves with God, that they

they would labour to keep and maintain their acquaintance with him inviolate and uninterrupted.

Thirdly. To thoſe whoſe acquaintance with God is intermitted, and they have in a manner loſt it, that they would labour to renew it. 3.

Firſt. Such as never yet had any acquaintance with God. O labour now to get into acquaintance with him. Acquaint thy ſelf *now* with him, *now* preſently, immediately, without any further delay. O conſider how long you have lived ſtrangers to God already, enemies to God already. Is it not enough that you have lived twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years already, without any intimacy or acquaintance with God? O if you love God, if you love your own ſouls, live not a day longer, live not an hour longer in that ſtrange condition. *The time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have lived in laſciviouſneſs, luſt, exceſs of wine,* &c. ſaith the Apoſtle *Peter*. And 1. 1 Pet. 4. 3.

Rom.13. 11. *it is high time to awake out of ſleep,* ſaith the Apoſtle *Paul.* So ſay I, the time paſt may ſuffice us to have lived without God in the world, and it is now high time for every one of us to begin to acquaint our ſelves with him.

Acquaint therefore *now thy ſelf with him. Now, now,* while God is pleaſed to offer and tender this acquaintance. *Now is the day of grace,* 2 Cor.6. 2. *now is the accepted time. Now,* while the golden ſcepter is held forth, while the Goſpel is preached unto you. *To day if you will hear his voice,* Heb.3.7. *harden not your hearts.* If God ſpeak to your hearts, and beſpeak your acquaintance with him, *ſee that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh,* but acquaint thy ſelf now with him.

Queſt. If any ſay, But how ſhall we do to get this acquaintance with God?

Anſw. I anſwer, O that there were ſuch a heart in you! O that every one into whoſe hands the providence of God ſhall bring this poor Treatiſe,

tiſe, were come thus far to ſeek after God, as ſeriouſly to enquire how they might be acquainted with God! you that are ſo, take theſe directions.

1. *Firſt.* Labour to be fully convinced of an abſolute neceſſity of acquainting your ſelves with God. Look upon it as your great duty, look upon it as that upon which not only the comfort of your lives, but the eternal ſalvation of your ſouls doth depend. There are three times eſpecially wherein this acquaintance with God will be found of great and abſolute neceſſity.

Firſt. In a time of common calamity. Such a time as our Saviour ſpeaks of. *When there ſhall be diſtreſs of Nations upon the earth, with perplexity, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things that are coming upon the earth*; (and how near ſuch times may be to us, and how faſt they may be haſtening upon us, who can tell?) O then happy are thoſe that have acquaintance Luke 21. 25, 26.

with God, they have a friend, an acquaintance that will not fail them, when their own hearts are ready to fail them, and would undoubtedly fail them, were it not for their acquaintance with God. Whereas they that have not acquainted themselves with God, will find God himself a terrour to them in the day of their calamity, God will deal with them as he threatens. *I will* Jer. 18. 17. *shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.*

2. Secondly. In the day of death, then acquaintance with God will be found absolutely necessary. There is no man, but when he comes to lye a dying, would be glad to have God his friend, and to receive his soul into his presence and favour. *Into thy hands Lord I commend my spirit; Lord Jesus receive my soul,* is the prayer, or at least the wish of every dying man and woman, that doth not dye like *Nabal*, stupid and senseless as a stock or stone. But do you think that God will do this for every

every one at the firſt asking? ſurely no. They that never regarded to acquaint themſelves with God in the time of their life, God will not ſo eaſily own them at the hour of their death; but they that have acquainted themſelves with God in the time of their life, they may with much comfort and aſſurance commend their ſouls into the hand of God, when they are at the point of death. And may ſay with *Paul*, *I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that good thing that I have committed unto him againſt that day.* It was a noble ſpeech of good Dr. *Preſton* when he lay a dying, and full of Chriſtian confidence and comfort. *I ſhall change my place, but not my company.* The meaning was, that he had ſo acquainted himſelf with God here upon earth, and had ſo much converſed with him, that now that he was to dye, his company ſhould ſtill be the ſame after death, that it was in life. How far are they from being able to ſpeak this at their

2 Tim. 1. 12.

death, that have had no care to acquaint themſelves with God, and to converſe with him in the courſe of their life?

3. *Thirdly.* In the day of Judgment it will then be neceſſary that you ſhould have acquaintance with God. Can you your ſelves imagine but that God, who is the *righteous Judge of all the world*, will in that great day look, and judge, and pronounce, far otherwiſe upon thoſe that have been here acquainted with him, than upon thoſe that have lived and dyed ſtrangers and enemies to him? To "the one he will ſay, Come ye bleſ-"ſed, ye have known me, and I "have known you; you have loved "me, and I have loved you; you have "viſited me, and I have viſited you, "and you have thankfully and glad-"ly entertained thoſe viſits, you "have been of my old acquaint-"ance, many a prayer have I re-"ceived from you, and many a tear "have you dropt into my bottle; "come therefore, come ye bleſſed, inherit

" inherit the Kingdom prepared for
" you from the beginning of the
" world. But to the other he will
" ſay, go ye curſed, ye have not
" known me, ye have not loved me,
" ye have not regarded to acquaint
" your ſelves with me, ye *have ſet*
" *at nought all my counſels, and would*
" *none of my reproofs*; ye have ſaid
" unto me, *depart from us, we deſire*
" *not the knowledge of thy wayes.*
Therefore now I ſay unto you, *depart from me into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* O dreadful ſentence, dreadful to hear, intolerable to bear, which yet ye can no wayes avoid, but by acquainting your ſelves with God. You muſt of neceſſity acquaint your ſelves with God, or dye miſerably, and periſh eternally. O preſs theſe and the like conſiderations upon your ſelves, till you be throughly and effectually convinced of an abſolute neceſſity of acquainting your ſelves with God. Then,

Secondly. Labour to be ſeriouſly and 2.

and deeply humbled, that you have lived ſo long as you have done, and lived unacquainted with God. Let me plead with you as *Moſes* doth with *Iſrael*; *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut. 32. 6.

"Is not he that God that hath given "thee life and being, that hath pre- "ſerved thee, upheld thee, main- "tained thee, fed thee, clothed "thee? is not he the God in whoſe "hands thy breath, and all thy ways "are? upon whoſe pleaſure and "favour thou dependeſt for all thy "preſent and eternal good, who is "able to kill or cauſe to live, to "ſave or to deſtroy, to make bleſ- "ſed, or to make miſerable, to all "eternity? And haſt thou lived "twenty, thirty, or forty years *be- "fore this God, yea, upon this God,* and "all this while never acquainted "thy ſelf at all with him? O what "unthankfulneſs, what diſingenuity, "what folly, what brutiſhneſs is this?

"this? If thou hadst fed a horse or a dog but the tenth part of that time that God hath fed thee, he would have taken more knowledge and acquaintance of thee than thou didst ever do of God.

Yea, thou hast not only not acquainted thy self with God, but thou hast not cared, thou hast not regarded to acquaint thy self with him, but hast lived in a continual mindlessness and regardlessness of God. *Of the rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee.* Deut. 32. 18.

Yea, thou hast not only neglected acquaintance with God, but thou hast despised it, undervalued it, preferred converse with the world, and with thy lusts above converse and acquaintance with God, as if a man should prefer the company and consortship of beggars and thieves, and whores, and such like lewd persons, before the favour, familiarity, and acquaintance of his Sovereign King: such an affront hast thou put upon

upon the great God of heaven and earth. O let the thoughts of this afflict and humble thee in time, or else know that hereafter it will torment thee to all eternity, and make thee tear thy flesh, and gnaw thy tongue, and curse thy self for rage & indignation at this thy present folly.

3. *Thirdly.* When you have thus convinced your selves of a necessity of getting acquaintance with God, and humbled your selves for living so long without acquaintance with God, Then in the third place, be careful to remove those things which may be bars in your way, and may obstruct and hinder your acquaintance with God. Now what is that? why sin, and only sin. Sin is the *wall of separation* between God and us, that keeps God and us from meeting together, and from acquainting one with another. *Your sins have separated between God and you,* Isa. 59. 2. *and have hid his face from you.* Therefore saith God, *Wash you, make you* Isa. 1. 16, 17. *clean, put away the evil of your doings from*

from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reaſon together. As if God had ſaid, Ay, now you have repented, and made your ſelves clean from ſin, now you are fit for God to treat withal, before you were not fit to come near him, nor approach his preſence. A rebel that would be admitted into his Princes favour and acquaintance, muſt firſt throw down his weapons of rebellion: ſo muſt they that would have any acquaintance with God, they muſt put away ſin, all ſin.

Sin is the only thing that God hates, and is an enemy againſt, for its own ſake; they therefore that would have any acquaintance with God, muſt renounce all acquaintance and familiarity with ſin. *If I regard iniquity in my heart: God will not hear my prayer.* Let a man pray never ſo often, and never ſo earneſtly, and beg acquaintance with God never ſo much, yet if he regard iniquity in his heart, God will Pſal. 66. 18.

not

not regard him, nor his prayers. We must therefore resolve to break off all our leagues with sin, to give a bill of divorce to every lust, to renounce for ever all acquaintance with sin, or else to renounce all acquaintance with God. Now which of these two would you rather do?

4. *Fourthly.* When you have thus convinced your selves of a necessity of acquainting your selves with God, and have humbled your selves for living so long without acquaintance with God, and have not only resolved, but have actually renounced every evil way: you must not now think, that for your humiliation, or for your repentance, or for your forsaking of your sins God is obliged or bound to take you for his friends, or to admit you into his acquaintance. No, these things you must do, or else never look for acquaintance with God: and when you have done all this, you must acknowledge, that if God should cast away you from his presence,

sence, & refuse to know your souls, it were but just and righteous. And if God doth ever admit you into his familiarity, it is of his meer condescension and grace, and therefore, In the *fourth* place, you must make use of a *Mediatour* to bring you into acquaintance with God. This course men take, who desire to get the favour and acquaintance of their Prince, or Sovereign, being themselves strangers, much more if they have been enemies to him, they make use of some special favourite to make way for them, to procure access into his presence, and to ingratiate them with him, that so they may get acquaintance. Now, such is the condition of all of us by nature in respect of God: we are not only strangers to him, but enemies, *Alienated, and enemies in our minds by wicked works.* And being such, our only way to get acquaintance with God, is to make use of a Mediatour; What Mediatour? *Peter* or *Paul*, or the *Virgin Mary*, or any Colos. 1. 21.

any other of the Saints in glory, as the Papists do? *Alas*, Abraham
Isa. 63.16. *knows us not, and* Israel *is ignorant of us.* If they were not, yet they are not high enough in the favour of God to prevail for us. No, no, as *there is but one God*, so *there is but one*
1 Tim. 2.5. *Mediatour betwixt God and Man, the man Christ Jesus.* He is the great favourite of heaven, who alone can bring us into acquaintance with God. O therefore make use of him.

Quest. 1. If you ask, What is the use you should make of *Christ* the Mediatour, and how you should make use of him?

Answ. 1. To the first of these, I answer. The use you are to make of Christ the Mediatour, in order to the gaining of acquaintance with God, consists in these particulars.

1. *First.* You are to make use of Christ the Mediatour for your reconciliation and peace with God. Peace must be before acquaintance can

can be. *And he muſt be your peace,* *Eph.* 2. 14.

Secondly. You muſt make uſe of *Chriſt* for bringing of you into Gods preſence. As *Joſeph* being the favourite of the Court of *Egypt*, brought *Jacob* and his Sons into the preſence of the King. *It is Chriſt in whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence.* The Original προσαγωγὴν is very ſignificant. Never come into Gods preſence, but get *Chriſt* to take thee by the hand. 2. Eph. 3. 12

Thirdly. You muſt make uſe of *Chriſt* to procure you acceptance with God. For as the Apoſtle ſaith, *He hath made us accepted in the beloved.* 3. Eph. 1. 6.

Fourthly. Make uſe of *Chriſt* for the giving of you the true, & ſaving, and ſpiritual, and effectual knowledge of God, without which you can never have true acquaintance with him. *No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* 4. Mat. 11. 27.

Fifthly. You muſt make uſe of 5.

Christ for the procuring and sending down of that holy Spirit, without which we can never have any true converse or familiarity with God. Our converse with God lyes partly in our visiting God in prayer, that we cannot do without his holy Spirit, which is a spirit of prayer, and partly it lyes in Gods visiting us, which he doth not but by the *breathings*, and *motions*, and *excitations*, and *inlargements*, and *consolations* of his blessed Spirit.

6. *Sixthly.* We must make use of *Christ*, as to bring us into the favour of God, so to keep and preserve us in the favour and acquaintance of God.

Quest. 2. If you ask, How you should make use of Christ in these particulars?

Answ. 2. I answer. Only by Faith, by believing in him, and trusting to him as the Son of *God*, the *Mediatour*, the *Advocate of sinners*, to do all this for us.

This therefore do when the guilt of

of your ſins looks you in the face, commit your ſelf and cauſe unto Chriſt, relye upon him to anſwer for you. When the doors of mercy, and of acceſs to God, ſeem to be ſhut againſt you, *flye to him* that bears the keys, and can at any time open to you, and let you into Gods preſence. Deſire him to *undertake* for you, to *anſwer* for you to God, to your own conſciences, to Satans accuſations, and rely boldly and confidently upon him, to do it for you. By him alone you may boldly and comfortably converſe with God, but without him, no drawing near, for *our God is a conſuming fire.* Heb. 12. 29.

Fifthly. When you have thus convinced your ſelves of a neceſſity of acquaintance with God, when you have humbled your ſelves for living ſo long as you have done without it, when you have removed obſtructions, when you have engaged the Mediatour, Then in the fifth place, do your duty. *Ne tibi* 5.

desis, do all that may possibly be done for the bringing of you into acquaintance with God. As namely,

1. First. Visit God often with your prayers.

2. Secondly. Frequent Gods house, the publique assemblies of the Saints, where God dwells, where Christ walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

3. Thirdly. Practise the duty of setting the Lord always before you, and setting your selves often in Gods presence.

4. Fourthly. Associate thy self with the Saints, those that are the friends and acquaintance God hath upon earth, that is a ready way to bring thee into the notice and acquaintance of God: as *Ruths* gleaning among *Boaz* his servants, was the first way of bringing her into *Boaz* his knowledge, and acquaintance, and of all the preferments that followed to her thereupon.

5. Fifthly. Beg for, and wait for a *visit* from God by his Spirit, and be

be importunate, be impudent here, take no denial, be not ſatisfied in one, or in few, but beg ſtill more and more; ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou beareſt unto thy people: O viſit me with thy ſalvation.* Pſalm 106. 4.

Sixthly, and Laſtly. Study compliance with God, and give thy ſelf to a punctual and exact obſervation of his will in all things. And theſe are the wayes of getting intimacy and acquaintance with God. 6.

CHAP. VII.

Exhorting thoſe that have acquaintance with God, to keep and maintain it.

MY next work is to exhort thoſe that have acquaintance with God, that they would be very careful to keep and maintain that acquaintance that they have with

God. And to move to this, I hope I ſhall need do no more than tell you, that it is a *very poſſible* thing for you to loſe that acquaintance and familiarity which you have with God. Though it is true, *Once the Lords, and ever the Lords*; and, *whom God loves once, he loves alwayes*; and it is not poſſible for any that have ever been reconciled unto God, and brought into his favour by Jeſus Chriſt, *totally* and *finally* to fall out of his favour again; yet it is poſſible for you to loſe that ſweet intimacy, and familiarity, and intercourſe, and acquaintance that you had with God, which was both the fruit and evidence of the love of God, and of your being in favour with him, it is poſſible for you to loſe your acquaintance with God, ſo far as that you may look upon God as a ſtranger, and God may look upon you as a ſtranger, as one whom he takes no notice of, of whom he hath no acquaintance with; you may look upon God as an enemy, and

and God may look upon you as an enemy, ſo far may you loſe your acquaintance with God. This I muſt tell you.

And when I have told you this, I need tell you no more; for you that have indeed had this acquaintance with God, have I know found ſo much ſweetneſs in it, and do ſo prize and value it, that if you were put to your choice, whether you would part with the acquaintance of the deareſt friend you had, Father, or Mother, or Brother, or Siſter, or Husband, or Wife, or part with your acquaintance with God; nay, whether you would part with all you are worth, nay, with your very lives, or part with your acquaintance with God; I know you would part with all, rather than part with that. I look therefore, that upon the very hearing that there is but ſo much as a poſſibility for you to loſe it, you ſhould preſently ask me, What you ſhould do to retain it? I anſwer.

1. *Firſt.* Maintain in your hearts this high eſteem of your intimacy and acquaintance with God, prize it above any other of your enjoyments whatſoever. *Seemeth it a ſmall*
1 Sam. 18. 23. *matter in your eyes to be the Son-in-law of a King?* ſaith *David* to *Sauls* ſervants: ſo ſay to thine own ſoul, Is it a ſmall matter to have acquaintance with God, to be the friend, the favourite of God, to have familiar acceſs to, and intercourſe with God? O prize it, and let God know thou doſt prize it as thou wouldſt prize heaven it ſelf.

2. *Secondly.* Maintain not a diſcouraging and diſtruſtful, but a vigilant and wakeful fear, of loſing this pretious injoyment. *Optimus theſauri cuſtos timor eſt.* Fear is the beſt keeper and preſerver of things that are dear and pretious, many a jewel is loſt through careleſsneſs and rechleſsneſs that might have been kept with fear and watchfulneſs.

3. *Thirdly.* Take heed of all ſuch things as may *unſoder* and *diſſolve* the ac-

acquaintance that is between God and you. As for inſtance.

Firſt. Take heed of falling into groſs and preſumptuous ſins; for do you not know in your ſouls, that every groſs ſin willingly committed, doth vex and grieve God? and do you not know, that if you vex and grieve God, he will be ſo far from continuing his friendſhip and acquaintance with you, that he will be turned to be your enemy? If I know that the doing of ſuch or ſuch a thing will vex a man that is my friend, and yet I will do it, vexed let him be, I will do it; this plainly ſhews I little value the mans friendſhip, and when he knows it, he will value mine as little, and ſo friendſhip and acquaintance will be interrupted and broken off between us: thou knoweſt as well as I can tell thee, that there is no ſin but it vexeth God, and there is nothing that vexeth God but ſin, and yet wilt thou ſin? wilt thou ſin, though thou knoweſt ſin is the only thing that vexeth 1.

vexeth God, yet wilt thou ſin? this is an argument thou valueſt friendſhip and acquaintance with God at a low rate. And if thou thus ſin and vex God, and ſlight his acquaintance, I tell thee, God will ſhake thee off from all acquaintance with him, and become thine enemy; nay, himſelf tells thee ſo. *But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy.* Take heed therefore of vexing God by willing and known ſin.

Iſa.63.10

2. *Secondly.* Take heed of being too familiar, and holding too much correſpondency and intimacy with wicked and ungodly men that are Gods enemies; we our ſelves will not take him for our friend, that is inward and intire with our profeſſed Adverſaries. *Zabud* was *Solomons friend*: *Solomon* had three ſpecial and known enemies. *Hadad*, *Rezon*, and *Jeroboam*. Now if *Zabud* meant to hold in with *Solomon*, it had been no wiſdom in the world for him to fall into acquaintance with

1 King.11

with any of theſe three perſons, it had been enough to caſt him out of the favour of *Solomon* for ever: ſo here, if we fall into intimacy and acquaintance with Gods open profeſſed, branded enemies, what can we look for but that God ſhould caſhiere us his acquaintance, and ſay to us as he did to *Jehoſhaphat*, Shouldſt *thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath come upon thee from the Lord.* 2 Chron. 19. 2.

Thirdly. Take heed of dealing treacherouſly with God. That is it the Lord chargeth the people withal, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*; *Surely, as a wife treacherouſly departeth from her husband*: or as the Original hath it, *from her friend*: *ſo have you dealt treacherouſly with me, O houſe of* Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord.* A Wife may have her failings, upon which the Husband poſſibly may frown and chide, and give her round language, but for all that he will be friends with her ſtill, and continue in habitation with her ſtill; but if once he come to 3. Jer. 3. 20.

per-

perceive that she deals treacherously with him, that she imbraceth the bosom of a stranger, that she loves another man better than she loves him; this quite breaks in sunder the knot of conjugal love and society between them, this is an unpardonable sin, *and an iniquity to be punished by the Judge*, as *Job* speaks: So it is here, the friends and acquaintance of God may have their failings and miscarriages, for which God may frown upon them, chide and rebuke them, but yet retain them in his favour still: but if once he perceive that they deal treacherously with him, if once they come to prefer any thing in their love before himself, and his acquaintance, this will be a breach indeed between God and them. O therefore, as you prize acquaintance with God, take heed of the inordinate love of the world, and the things of the world. Remember what the Apostle *James* saith, *Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friend-*

Job 31. 11.

James 4. 4.

ship

ſhip of the world is enmity with God? Whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Take heed therefore of the world.

Fourthly. Take heed of too much abſence from God, and diſcontinuance of acquaintance, converſe, and familiarity with him. Some things there are that do *diſſecare amicitiam*, chop in ſunder friendſhip and acquaintance, as it were, at one ſtroke, and ſome things do *diſſuere amicitiam*, unrip and unſew it, and looſen it by little and little; great unkindneſſes, wrongs, and injuries, theſe cut the bands of love and friendſhip in ſunder; but long abſence of friends one from another, and diſcontinuance of converſe and familiarity, and letting fall the performance of friendly offices, viſits, colloquies, and the like; theſe looſen friendſhip by degrees, and cauſe it to languiſh and dye. Hence the Proverb of *amicitia Academica*, Univerſity-friendſhip, that holds only for a time. Scholars while they live 4.

to-

together in the same University, often meeting, and walking, and talking together, they grow into great familiarity and acquaintance one with another; but afterwards being parted, and living at distance one from another, their friendship and acquaintance dyes, and is extinct: so it is here, absence from God, disuse and discontinuance of communion with him, not frequenting Gods company, not often resorting to him, and speaking to him, will not only loosen, but lose our acquaintance with him.

If therefore we would maintain our acquaintance with God, we must often and daily visit him, frequent his house and Ordinances, be frequent in reading, hearing, praying; converse with him by holy meditations, and soliloquies, invite him home to us, importune him to visit our hearts with his Spirit: as we do by our other friends, we often visit them, and invite them to visit us, assuring them that our house,

and

and any thing that we have, is at their ſervice: thus muſt we deal with God, and this is the way to maintain communion and acquaintance with him.

Fifthly. Take heed of entertaining jealouſies and ſuſpitions of God, and of his love unto thee, or taking things unkindly at Gods hand. Many a man by taking up a groundleſs conceit that his friend is alienated from him, gives his friend juſt cauſe of alienation, and ſo loſeth his friend: I am ſure we often deal ſo with God; and I am perſwaded there is ſcarce any one thing whereby the true friends of God do more grieve him, and hinder their free and comfortable acquaintance with him, than by thinking that God, παροξύνεται is eaſily provoked, ſo eaſily, that for involuntary failings and infirmities, ſuch as are wandring thoughts, deadneſs of heart in prayer, and the like, (which God knows they cannot help if their lives lay upon it, and God knows 5.

knows they are as bitter to them as death it self) and yet they do think, that for these God will fall quite out with them, and *tantum non*, cast them down to hell; and by these hard thoughts they grieve God, they break the law of friendship, they discourage and dishearten themselves from converse with God, and so their hearts are alienated and estranged from God, and then they (measuring God by themselves, as if he were like one of us) think God is estranged from them, and fallen out with them, when indeed it is, they are fallen out with him. Therefore take heed of these thoughts of God.

6. *Sixthly.* Take heed that Satan do not set in his foot between God and you; take heed you give no ear to what he will tell you concerning God, and the purposes and dispensations of God towards you. You know what the holy Ghost saith, *A whisperer separateth chief friends.* Pro. 16. 28. There are no two friends in the world

world ſo great, but if either of them liſten and give way to whiſperers, or detractors, that ſeek to ſet ſtrife and variance between them, and believe every tale that they tell, bands of friendſhip will quickly be looſed, and they will be as great enemies as ever they were friends; we know that Satans great deſign is to ſet ſtrife between God and Man; he began this game in paradiſe, God and Man were perfect friends, till the Devil comes like a whiſperer and ſlanders God, and tells *Eve* that it was out of meer envy and ill will that God had forbidden her and her husband to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and ſhe believing this ſlander did eat, and ſo the league of friendſhip was broken between God and her: ſo deals the Devil ſtill, not indeed with thoſe whom he knows to be Gods enemies, he doth not trouble their heads much with the thoughts of God, but fills their heads with the thoughts of other

matters; but where he knows, or but ſuſpects any to be the friends of God, or perceives them but to be ſeeking after reconciliation and acquaintance with God, O the ſtrange thoughts of God that he buzzeth into their minds! ſometimes he tells them that God hates them worſe than he hates a dog or a toad: that it is in vain for them to pray, or repent, or to do any thing, God hath rejected them, they are reprobate from all eternity; if God afflict them, he tells them, that now they may ſee and feel, if they will, that God is angry with them, and hates them, and theſe afflictions are but the fore-runners and beginnings of hell, and what they feel here is nothing to what they ſhall feel hereafter: if God ſpare them from affliction, he tells them, God doth this but to fat them againſt the day of ſlaughter, and that they may the ſooner fill up the meaſure of their ſin, and be ripe for hell. And thus Satan ſlanders God in all his wayes,

and

and that not to the wicked, and thoſe that are Gods enemies, but to thoſe that are his friends; and the believing of thoſe lyes and ſlanders of Satan againſt God, proves many times, the very bane and break-neck, as I may ſo ſay, of acquaintance with God. Therefore take heed of giving credit to the Devil and his ſuggeſtions, and whatever Satan tells you of God, believe it not, but believe the contrary to be true, becauſe that which *Satan* ſpeaks of God cannot but be falſe. Thus I have ſhewn you what the things are we muſt take heed of, if we would maintain our acquaintance with God. Which is the third direction.

Fourthly. If thou wouldſt maintain thy acquaintance with God, look that thy heart be ſincere and upright with him. No man would entertain into his boſom, as his entire friend, one that he knows doth but flatter and diſſemble with him, and in his heart doth not love him. 4.

You know what *Jehu* said to *Jonadab*, *Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart?* And when he said, *It is*, then *he bid him give him his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot.* God need not ask any of us that question, *Is thine heart right?* for if it be not, he knows it well enough; and if it be not, he will never give us the *hand* of friendship, nor never take us up into *the chariot* of acquaintance with himself. To this therefore let us look that our hearts be right with God, that what profession we make of our love, and of our desires of acquaintance with him, may come from a good and honest heart.

2 Kings 10.15.

5. *Fifthly.* If you would maintain and keep your acquaintance with God, then labour to increase your acquaintance with God, and to grow in it. For as grace, so the priviledges of grace are of that nature, that they cannot stand at a stay, but are like the Sun, alwayes either ascending or descending, like the Sea,

Sea, that is ever either ebbing or flowing, ſo theſe are ever either increaſing or decreaſing, either growing or decaying. If therefore you would not have your acquaintance with God decay and dye, have a care that it may increaſe and grow. And to that end labour to grow in thoſe things wherein acquaintance with God lyes; as namely, 1. In the knowledge of God, *Hoſ.* 6.3. 2. In converſe with God. 3. In confidence in God. 4. In conformity unto God. Converſe with God will conform us unto God, and conformity unto God will confirm and increaſe our converſe with God.

Sixthly. Be willing to be ruled by God in all things, be punctual in obſerving his commands; exactly careful to pleaſe him well in all things. So in the verſe after the Text, *Receive the Law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.* Let Gods word be a Law to thee, *Job.* 14. 21, 23. 6. Job 22. 22.

Laſtly. Be much in converſe with 7.

thoſe that are the friends and acquaintance of God. Let them be thy companions, ſo they were *Davids*; *I am a companion of all them that fear thee.* Let them be thy delight, ſo they were *Davids*; *To the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.* As conſorting our ſelves with the wicked, and ſuch as are Gods enemies, is the ready way to loſe our acquaintance with God; ſo on the contrary, conſorting with the Saints that are Gods friends, is the way to keep and hold our acquaintance with God. *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us; and truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt.*

Pſal. 119. 63.

Pſal. 16. 3.

1 Joh. 1. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Exhorting those who have lost their acquaintance with God, to endeavour the recovery of it.

I Come now to exhort those who have sometimes had acquaintance with God, but have lost it again, that they would by all means possible endeavour the recovery of it. Now this is a state and condition not impossible for the true Saints and friends of God to be reduced into. This is frequently mentioned in Scripture under several notions and terms, sometimes under the notion of *Gods withdrawing* himself. *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved hath withdrawn himself*; sometimes of *Gods hiding himself. How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy self* for ever? sometimes of *casting* out. *I will cast you out of my sight*: sometimes of *shutting*

Cant. 5.6. Psal. 89. 46. Jer. 7.15.

Lam. 3. 8. out. *Also, when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer*: sometimes of Psal. 43. 2. *casting* off: Why *dost thou cast me off?* And every one of these may seem to be a several degree or increase of loss of acquaintance with God.

1. *First.* When *God* doth *withdraw himself*, and doth not so frequently *visit* the soul with his grace and Spirit, as he was wont, here now is some abatement, some diminution of the acquaintance that was between God and the soul. But then,

2. *Secondly.* When *God hides himself*, that is, when the soul is sensible of Gods withdrawing, doth set it self seriously and earnestly to seek God, and would fain find him, and re-injoy his presence and communion with him, and *God hides himself*, and the soul cannot find him, but it is as it was with those we read of in *Hosea*. Hos. 5. 6. *They shall go with their flocks, and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him, he hath withdrawn himself from them.* This now is more. But,

Third-

Thirdly. When *God* doth not only thus hide himſelf, but *caſt the ſoul* as it were out *of his ſight*; this is more and heavier. As if a man, when one that hath been his acquaintance comes to his houſe, he ſhould not only refuſe to ſee him, or ſpeak with him, but plainly turn him out of doors; this were a ſign of great alteration, and alienation of mind in one that had been a friend. 3.

Fourthly. When *God* doth not only caſt the ſoul out, but *ſhut him out*, ſhut the door of mercy as it were upon him, this is yet more. 4.

Fifthly and *Laſtly.* When God not only doth this, but even *caſts off* the ſoul, renounceth as it were all friendſhip and amity with it for the future, ſaying as the *Romans* were wont to do to their Wives, when they gave them a divorce, *Res tuas tibi habeto*, Look to your own matters, I will have no more to do with you, or as the people did when they rejected the poſterity of *David* from reigning. *Now ſee to thine own houſe* 1 Kings 12. 16. 5.

house *David*. Thus high may the breach come to be between God and those that have been his friends and acquaintance.

Now a child of God, a friend, and acquaintance of God, doth then think and conclude, that God deals thus with him, *withdraws* himself, *hides* himself, *casts* him *out*, *casts* him *off*, when he finds God suspending and with-holding the wonted influences of the Spirit of grace from him.

For this acquaintance between *God* and our souls, as the Lord Jesus Christ is the procurer of it, so the Spirit of grace is the *Internuncius*, the manager and worker of it; we can neither acquaint our selves with God, but by that Spirit, nor doth God acquaint himself with us, or communicate himself unto us, but by the same Spirit. When therefore the soul finds those influences of the Spirit of God that it was wont to have, in praying, and hearing, and Sacraments, and other holy duties, when

when the ſoul finds them withdrawn, it preſently fears, yea concludes God is grown a ſtranger, hides himſelf, and caſts the ſoul off.

Now the influences of Gods Spirit into the hearts of his people, are of two ſorts; Either *influences of comfort*, or *influences of grace.*

Firſt. There are *influences of comfort*, which the Spirit of God ſends into the hearts of the Saints, ſhedding the love of God abroad in their hearts, giving them ſuch a real, ſweet, powerful taſte, and feeling of the love of God in their ſouls, as fills them with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. Now when theſe ſweet and comfortable influences of the Spirit of God are ſuſpended and withdrawn, this cannot but make an alteration in the ſoul, in its apprehenſions of Gods love, and their intereſt in him, and acquaintance with him. ‖ Rom 5.5.

Secondly. There are influences of the Spirit of God, which are influences

ences of grace, and theſe are threefold. Either,

Firſt. That influence of the Spirit, whereby grace is firſt infuſed and wrought in the ſoul. Or,

Secondly. That influence of the Spirit, whereby grace when it is infuſed, is actuated and ſet on work in the ſoul. Or,

Thirdly. That influence of the Spirit, whereby grace is increaſed and cauſed to grow in the ſoul.

Now for the infuſing and working of grace in the ſoul, *one ſingle* influence of the Spirit is ſufficient; but for the actuating and increaſing of grace, renewed and repeated influences are requiſite. As one act of divine power and providence is enough for the producing of the creatures into being; but for the continuance of their being, and for their operations, there is required a continual efflux of providence; ſo it is here. Now when theſe influences of the Spirit are ſuſpended and withdrawn, the ſoul can neither keep

keep up and carry on his acquaintance with God in a way of duty, ſo as it *ſhould*, nor apprehend God communicating himſelf and Spirit to him, ſo as it *would*, and ſo cannot but from both conclude an interruption of that acquaintance and familiarity that hath been between God and it.

Now to thoſe whoſe condition this is, give me leave to propound,

Firſt. Some things by way of ſupport and conſolation.

Secondly. Some things by way of counſel and direction. And,

Firſt. By way of ſupport and conſolation, ſeveral things I have to ſay.

The *Firſt* is this. That how ſad and ſtrange ſoever thy condition may ſeem to be, thou art not the *firſt*, nor art like to be the *laſt* of the *Friends* and *Saints* of God, whoſe condition this hath been or may be. Read but over the Book of the Pſalms; how often do you find there the Saints complaining of *Gods* 1.

hiding

hiding his face from them, *caſting them* out, *caſting them* off, *forſaking*, *forgetting* them, *ſhutting out* their prayers, and the like. Now this may be ſome comfort to thee, as it is to a man that is in a wilderneſs, to find the tract and footſteps of men that have gone that way before him.

There are, as *Gerſon* obſerves, three ſorts of Chriſtians.

Some that are in *a winter* condition. In winter you know the dayes are ſhort, and the nights are long, and the dayes for the moſt part are cloudy and dark, the Sun being obſcured with many clouds and fogs; there are ſharp colds and great rains, and now and then it may be a fair day, but very rarely: ſo *ſome Chriſtians* they have ſhort *dayes*, and long *nights*, ſhort *viſits*, and long *abſence* of God, they have much *darkneſs* and little *light*, much *coldneſs* and little *heat* in their ſpirits, many ſhowres of griefs and tears, rarely now and then a gleam of comfort.

Gerſon *de monte contemplat. cap.* 22.

Rara hora brevis mora. Bernard.

Other

Other Chriſtians, ſaith he, are as it were in the ſpring, *in primo vere.* In the Spring you know, it is one day fair and clear, another day cloudy and rainy; but we ſee the Sun oftner in the Spring, and the beams of it are more vigorous and warmthful than in the winter: now theſe are ſuch whom the *Sun of righteouſneſs* doth more frequently viſit than the former, and ſheds more warmthful and vigorous influences into their hearts, and yet withdraws himſelf from them ſometimes: ſometimes their Sun is under a cloud. *Ut modicum illum videant, & modicum non videant*, and they have their wet and ſorrowful dayes and times too.

Others there are with whom it is *Midſummer*, their Sun is ſeldom clouded: but when it is, it is more terrible, there are greater tempeſts of thunder, and lightning, and rain many times in ſummer than in winter, though not ſo conſtant rain. Theſe are the beſt and higheſt form

of

of *Chriſtians*: who though they enjoy a more conſtant ſerenity, and more conſtant peace and communion with God, than the other, yet now and then meet with more violent and ſtrong temptations, and deeper deſertions than the former, their temptations are very ſharp, but then they are ſhort. So that you ſee by this diſtribution there is no ſtate of a Chriſtian life on this ſide heaven exempted and priviledged from this hiding of Gods face, and ſuſpending the influences of his grace and love. Whether then thou be in thy *Winter*, or in thy *Spring*, or in thy *Summer*, clouds may come over thy ſoul that may hide the face of God from thee, and intercept the influences of his Spirit and grace; this is common to Chriſtians, whatever degree of grace they have attained: therefore ſay no more, that never any was in ſuch a condition as thou.

2. *The Second* thing I have to ſay to thee is this; That the worſt of thy con-

condition is this, It is a withdrawing, not of *the love of God* from thee, but *of wonted expreſſions* of his love, it is but a withdrawing of the *influence* of his Spirit from thee, *not* the *preſence* of his Spirit from thee; I ſay it is but a withdrawing of the manifeſtation of Gods love from thee; God doth not *look* ſo kindly upon thee when thou comeſt to *ſeek his face*, as he was wont to do: God doth not ſpeak ſo comfortably to thee, he doth *not ſpeak* ſo to thine heart when thou comeſt to *hear* his word, as he was wont to do; God doth not make thee *ſo welcom* to *his table* when thou comeſt there, nor give thee ſuch a double portion of the marrow and fatneſs of his Ordinances as he was wont to do. I confeſs here is a great change in the outward carriage of God, and a great abatement of the wonted expreſſions of his love; but there is no change at all in the mind and will of God, no abatement at all in the love of God, which is as unchangeable as God himſelf. *David*

loved *Absalom* as dearly all that three years in which he would not endure him to come into his presence, nor permit him to see his face, as he did before in any time of his life, though in wisdom he did conceal and smoother his love: so God may conceal his love for a while, but he loves thee still as well as ever.

He hath taken away the wonted influences of his Spirit from thee, but *his Spirit it self* he hath *not* taken from thee. Christs prayer and engagement is, that the Spirit where once he is given shall abide for ever. Therefore I say, the influences of the Spirit may be suspended, but the Spirit it self is not departed, as it was with *Eutychus* when they thought he was dead; his life, saith *Paul*, that is, his Spirit, his soul is in him, and yet all the influences of his soul into his body, either visible to others, or sensible to himself, were for the present suspended: so is it here, the visible sensible influences of the Spirit may be suspended, but the Spirit is not departed, the band of union is not dissolved. *Third-*

Joh. 14. 16.

Thirdly. As it is the influence, and not the preſence of the *Spirit* that is withdrawn, ſo it is not the total influence of the Spirit that is withdrawn from thee, but only part of it; all the influences of the Spirit are not withdrawn, but only ſome of them. For the influences of the Spirit are of two ſorts. Either ſuch as are *neceſſary to the being* of a Chriſtian in the ſtate of grace, and theſe are ſecret, hidden, and unſenſible; or elſe ſuch as tend to the *well* and comfortable *being* of a Chriſtian, and theſe are evident and ſenſible: as in the body there are ſome influences of the ſoul, that are neceſſary to the animation and quickening of the body, and theſe remain when the body is in a ſwoon, though they be ſecret and hidden, and neither felt by the body it ſelf, nor diſcerned by the beholders; other influences there are that tend to the perfection of life in the body, as tending to motion and ſenſe; theſe are both ſenſible to themſelves, and viſible in the effects 3.

of them to others; now these latter influences of the soul into the body, may be suspended, when yet the other are continued: so it is here, they are but the sensible and arbitrary influences of the Spirit that are suspended, the necessary influences of the Spirit are yet continued.

4. *Fourthly.* As it is the influence and not the presence of the Spirit that is withdrawn, and as it is but some of the influences, not the whole influence that is withdrawn: so fourthly, this influence is but suspended, it is not quite cut off; and there is a great difference between these two. If water be conveyed through a pipe, from a fountain to a cistern; if that pipe be stopt, the stream is suspended, and it is but unstopping the pipe, removing the obstruction, and the water will flow as plentifully as ever it did before; but if the stream be cut off or turned another way, then the case is otherwise, the matter is irrecoverable: Poor soul, because thou

thou haſt not thoſe influences freſh and lively from the Spirit of God that thou haſt had, thou thinkeſt the ſtream is quite cut off, the heart of God thou thinkeſt is quite turned away from thee. Alas, thou art miſtaken, it is only the pipe is ſtopt, ſomething lyes in the way that obſtructs the influences of the Spirit of God into thee; remove but that, and the influences of the Spirit will come in upon thee, in as full a ſtream as ever. For (which is the laſt thing that I have to propound to thee for thy conſolation) thou muſt not think

In the fifth place; That becauſe God hides himſelf, and withdraws himſelf, and carries himſelf at preſent, not as a friend, but rather as a ſtranger, as an enemy to thee, do not think that he will alwayes do ſo. When he hath ſaid plainly, *He will not alwayes chide; neither keepeth he his anger for ever. He will not contend for ever, neither will he be alwayes wroth. He will not caſt off for ever. But though he cauſe grief, yet will he have* 5. Pſal. 103. 9. Iſa. 57. 16. Lam. 3. 31, 32.

compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. These are clear and expres promises of a true and faithful God; heaven and earth shall fail before one word or tittle of these promises shall fail. It is therefore a great infirmity in thee, to think, that because God now hides his face from thee, he will do so for ever; or because, that God seems to be fallen out with thee, therefore he will never more be friends with thee. Thus to think, is I say, a great infirmity in thee. So *Asaph* acknowledgeth for himself, when he had been questioning with his own soul. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for ever? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* He concludes, *This is my infirmity.* As who should say, It is a great weakness in me so to imagine; so it is in thee, if thou dost so think.

Psal. 77. 7,8,9,10.

These things thus premised, as grounds of hope and consolation,

I proceed now to ſhew what courſe you muſt take to recover favour with God, and your acquaintance with him again. And ſo,

Firſt. Enquire whether you have not given God cauſe thus to eſtrange and abſent himſelf from you, and break off acquaintance with you. To that end make uſe of the particulars laid down before. 1. Enquire whether you have not fallen into ſome known and groſs ſin. 2. Whether you have not held too much correſpondence with, and delighted too much in the company of wicked and ungodly men. 3. Whether you have not been too much carried away with the inordinate love of the world, and of the things of the world. 4. Whether you have not too much abſented your ſelves from God, and neglected your wonted and appointed times of meeting him, and acquainting your ſelves with him. 5. Whether you have not dealt unfriendly with God, by entertaining jealouſies and hard thoughts of God. And, 6. giving 1.

too much credit to Satans lyes, and ſlanders. Inquire ſeriouſly, whether you have not been guilty in ſome or other of theſe particulars; for uſually, I muſt tell you, the breach begins on our part, we give God cauſe to eſtrange himſelf from us. When thou haſt done this: Then,

2. *Secondly.* Take the counſel the holy Ghoſt gives; *Do this now, my Son, and deliver thy ſelf, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend: go, humble thy ſelf, and make ſure thy friend.* Or as the Margent reads it, *Go humble thy ſelf, and prevail with thy friend.* Humble thy ſelf, that is the way to prevail with God, and to make him yet thy ſure friend, though he ſeems to be thine enemy. Humble thy ſelf, and that upon a twofold account.

Prov. 6. 3.

1. *Firſt.* For the ſad condition that thou art in at preſent.

Secondly. For the ſin that hath brought thee into this ſad condition.

Firſt. Humble thy ſelf for the ſad condition that thou art in. Think and ſay thus to thy ſelf, Wo is me

"me for my God, my life is depart-
"ed from me, and how am I chang-
"ed? O how was I wont to meet
"God in his Ordinances? and what
"sweet communion and acquaint-
"ance had I once with him, but
"now he hides himself, and will not
"come at me. I pray, but he hears me not; I hearken after him, but he speaks not; I call, but he answers not. Behold, *I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot find him. On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.* And say again as *Job*; *O that it were with me as in moneths past, as in the dayes when God preserved me: When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness. When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, and the Almighty was yet with me.* It is an excellent meditation *Bernard* hath to this purpose. "Whence
"comes this barrenness that posses-
"eth my soul? whence is it that my
"heart is dryed up like a bottle in
the

Job 23. 8, 9.

Job 29. 2, 3, 4.

"the smoke, and my soul is like the "dry and parched wilderness? *Non* "*possum lachrymas fundere*, I cannot "weep, I find no savour in Psalms, "I have no delight in reading of the "Scriptures; prayer doth not re-"fresh me, I have no heart to me-"ditation, or any thing that is good. "*Hei mihi*, Wo is me! God visit-"eth the mountains of my compa-"nions, but skips over my moun-"tain, and never toucheth it. Here "is one ravished into the third hea-"vens in holy meditations. There "is another prays, as if he would "rend the heavens with his pray-"ers; another excels in zeal, ano-"ther in patience, another in humi-"lity, another in holiness. These are Souls whom God visits, these are "mountains upon which God com-mands the rain of blessing, *Sed ego miser qui nihil horum sentio*, but wretched I that feel none of these things; what am I but as one of the mountains of *Gilboa*, upon whom there falls neither dew nor rain, nor are there fields of offering there.

Bern. in Cant. Ser-mon. 74.

there. Thus humble thy ſelf, and bewail thy ſtate and condition.

Secondly. Humble thy ſelf again, 2. for thy ſin that hath brought thee into this ſad condition. "Think "and ſay thus with thy ſelf. Oh, what "a thing is this, that I ſhould by my "ſin provoke him to leave me, in "whoſe preſence I have had ſuch "life, ſuch light, ſuch liberty, ſuch "peace, ſuch joy. *O wretch that I "am!* that that communion and ac-"quaintance that I had with God, "was of no more eſteem with me, "but that I ſhould thus loſe it by "my folly! I have been careful to "keep my intereſt & acquaintance "with this and that man, but have "not been careful to keep my inte-"reſt and acquaintance with God. That which I begged with tears, and was many a year a getting, how have I by my ſin loſt it on a ſudden? O what have I done againſt my God, yea againſt my ſelf? O my folly, that have loſt that for want of care, that now I would redeem again, if it were poſſible, with my blood.

Third-

3. *Thirdly.* Follow God with mournful cryes and prayers, beg of him that he would return unto thee, and renew acquaintance with thee; importune him by all the ancient love that hath been between him and thee, that he would be gracious yet unto thee; put him in mind of *his ancient love to thee.* Say as the Church, Psal. 89. 49. *Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses? Lord,* what is become of all that love which sometimes thou barest and expressedst to thy worthless servant? And humbly put God in remembrance *of thy ancient love to him*; seeing God is pleased to be so gracious as to vouchsafe to remember it. Jer. 2. 2. *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness,* &c. Entreat God to remember, there was a time when thy love was more vigorous, and more fervent to him than it is now, when thou couldst have followed him through a wilderness, through a sea, through fire and water; tel him, it is thy grief that thou canst not so love him now:

entreat

entreat him by *renewing his love* to thee, to *revive thy love* to him, beg of him that all old kindnesses may not be forgotten; cast up thy weeping eyes with the sad complaint of a bleeding soul to thy ancient friend, and his bowels will roll, his compassions will relent towards thee.

Fourthly. Submit to any conditions of reconcilement, and accept of the lowest degree of restauration to favour and acquaintance with God. Say, *Lord*, chide, rebuke, smite me, command, impose, do what thou wilt with me, *only cast me not out of thy presence, cashiere me not* wholly and for ever: say as the *poor Prodigal, Make me but as one of thine hired servants*: as the *woman of* Canaan, *Let me but gather up the crumbs among the dogs.* "Lord, if I have so "far sinned, as that I may not be re-"stored to that degree of nearness "that I had before, if I may not "have a place among thy children, "among thy friends; Lord set me "among thy servants, thy hired ser-"vants, yea, if it be but among the dogs 4.

"dogs of thy family, Lord, so I "may be in thy presence, and see "thy face I shall be thankful even "for so much.

5. *Fifthly.* Go to the Lord Jesus Christ, the *Dayes-man*, the *Friend-maker*, between *God* and *Enemies*; much more between *God*, and those that sometimes were *his friends*. Go to him, pray him to take thee by the hand, yet once again, and reconcile thee anew to God. He as *God*, is a *middle person* between the *Father* and the *Spirit*; and as *God-man*, he is a *middle Person* between *God* and *Man*: he is our *Peace*, he is our *Advocate* with the *Father*. Who with *one* appearing in heaven for us, with *one* opening of his mouth, can make *God* and *us friends*, if we had never been friends before; therefore go to him, ingage him by his *Name*, by his *Office*, by his *Undertakings*, to do this for thee.

6. *Sixthly.* Go to the Saints of God that are upon earth, that are Gods favourite and acquaintance, make thy case known to them, entreat them

them to ſtrive with God in prayer for thee. This direction God gave the friends of *Job*, as you may ſee in Chapt. 42. v. 8. *Go to my ſervant* Job, *and my ſervant* Job *ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept.*

Seventhly. Whatever the iſſue of this thy mourning, praying, and going to Chriſt, begging the prayers of others be; though God ſhould hide his face ſtil, & carry it ſtrangely, ſtill, yet think thou, and ſpeak thou honourably of God however. Following that preſident of the *Pſalmiſt*, or rather of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, of whom the Pſalmiſt was but a type. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Why art thou ſo far from helping me, &c. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the praiſes of Iſrael.* 7. Pſal. 22. 1, 2, 3.

Leſtly. If God yet ſeem ſtill to be angry with thee, take the counſel the holy Ghoſt gives. *When the ſpirit of the Ruler riſeth up againſt thee leave not thy place, for yielding paciſieth great offences.* So now, when the Spirit of God ſeems to be provoked againſt thee, leave not thy place, 8. Eccleſ. 10. 4.

leave

leave not thy ſtation, leave not praying, and hearing, and waiting upon God in all holy Ordinances. *Henry the fourth, Emperor* of *Germany*, waited three whole dayes in the depth of Winter, bare-foot and bare-legged at the gate of the Pope's Caſtle, before he could obtain admiſſion into his preſence, and recover his grace and favour. Upon occaſion of a diſpleaſure conceived by the *Pope* againſt the City and State of *Venice*. *Franciſcus Dandalus*, afterwards *Duke of Venice*, was ſent Embaſſador to *Rome* to ſeek reconciliation; and when no other means would mollifie the Pope's proud and inraged heart, the Prince at length ſo far abaſed himſelf, as to put upon his neck a coller and chain, and couch under the Pope's table like a dog at his feet, to ſee if by that means he might at length obtain.

Now ſhall *Princes* and *Emperors* thus abaſe themſelves in ſeeking the favour of a mortal man, and wait in theſe abaſements long; O *how low* ſhould we lye, how *long ſhould we wait*, if by any means, or at any time we may recover the favour of God, and readmiſſion into his preſence!

FINIS.